



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

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# Prospectus

## An opportunity for outfitting and guiding

Offered by:

Divide Ranger District, Rio Grande National Forest  
Rio Grande, Saguache, Mineral, Hinsdale, and San Juan Counties  
Colorado



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## Introduction

The Rio Grande National Forest (RGNF), Divide Ranger District (Divide RD) is soliciting proposals for a variety of outfitting and guiding services. The solicitation process will identify individuals or organizations to provide commercial services that either are not available or are not adequately provided on the Divide RD. The Divide RD has received requests for the activities listed below, demonstrating competitive interest and the need to issue this prospectus before issuing any authorizations. The terms “proposal” and “application” are used interchangeably throughout this document.

The Divide RD is soliciting proposals for the following outfitter and guide services:

1. Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) guided day trips
2. OHV delivery to National Forest System (NFS) lands, including pick up and/or retrieval
3. Scenic drives, including four-wheel drive (4WD) tours
4. Progressive mountain biking
5. Shuttle services
6. Over Snow Vehicle (OSV) guided day trips
7. Proponent-generated requests **excluding** fishing, hunting, river use, Wilderness, and horseback rides

While the intent of this solicitation is to focus on Items 1-6, the Divide RD will also use this opportunity to consider, without obligation, proposed outfitting and guiding services other than those specifically identified (Item 7).

The Divide RD acknowledges that, although there is competitive interest for additional float and wade fishing, hunting, rafting, Wilderness trips, and horseback rides, these are EXCLUDED from consideration in this prospectus. This is due to concerns for capacity along the river and within the Wilderness areas, limited draw areas for hunting, and the number of existing authorizations for these activities.

The Divide RD anticipates authorizing more than one special use permit and allocating up to a maximum of 10,000 service days for Items 1-7 combined. However, the final number of service days issued will depend on the proposals received. The Divide RD reserves the right to not issue any permits.

Prospective applicants should be aware that capacity limits (maximum number of service days allowed in a geographic area) could constrain a business’s ability to grow and expand in the future. Opportunities for businesses to expand under a special use permit depend on the resource capacity, the patterns and trends of both the outfitted and non-outfitted public, future natural resource issues, and permittee performance.

The objective of permitting commercial activities on NFS lands is to address a need, provide for the health and safety of users, protect the resources, and to provide a quality recreation experience for the public. We do not anticipate that any non-commercial use by the public in the area would be adversely impacted by these services.

## General description of the area

The RGNF is part of the San Luis Valley, in south-central Colorado. The San Luis Valley is rural and its economy relies heavily on agriculture and tourism. The Divide RD makes up a large portion of the western side of the RGNF and encompasses approximately 980,000 acres. The Divide RD primarily services the communities of Monte Vista, Del Norte, South Fork, and Creede. All of these communities are actively promoting a wider range of recreational opportunities to boost tourism and economic stability. This has become particularly important to these areas following the 2013 West Fork Fire Complex that severely impacted the local economy. The Divide RD recognizes the unique opportunity that the area provides for recreational endeavors due the natural beauty of the surrounding mountains, valley, and high montane desert and the proximity to the tourism-focused communities of the San Luis Valley.

## Geographic areas included in the prospectus

The RGNF allocates and monitors recreation use based on Appendix C, Capacity, of the RGNF Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan, 1996). Capacity is identified by compartments, which are based on watersheds. The services solicited through this prospectus – guided OHV day trips or 4WD tours, for example - will likely involve travel between multiple compartments. To make identifying the desired geographic area easier for proponents, this solicitation is combining individual compartments into larger areas, described below. Combining the individual compartments does not change the available capacity within each compartment or the overall availability or allocation of service days.

The maps included in Appendix A illustrate the larger geographic areas' boundaries and should be referenced when looking at the specific services solicited. These maps are based on the RGNF Visitor Map and the Motor Vehicle Use Map for the Divide RD.

Many areas throughout the Divide RD either currently have active logging or have potential for future logging. Efforts will be made to accommodate both logging traffic and commercial outfitter/guide use on forest roads and groomed snowmobile routes. Respondents should be aware that the Forest Service is a multiple-use agency, the past decade's spruce beetle epidemic has led to extensive areas with dead trees, and that special use permits do not confer exclusive use of NFS land.

### North Forty

#### *Includes:*

The area bounded by Pool Table Road (National Forest System Road (NFSR) 600) to the west, Highways 149 and 160 to the south, BLM land to the east, and the Divide/Saguache Ranger District administrative boundary to the north.

National Forest System Trail (NFST) 787 crosses the Saguache/Divide Ranger District boundary and is included in this prospectus.

All motorized roads and trails will be considered unless specifically excluded.

#### *Excludes:*

NFSR 600 past the junction with NFSR 600.3A, NFSTs 794 and 855.

## **South Forty**

*Includes:*

The area bounded by Highway 160 to the west and north, the continental divide to the south, and Bennett Creek to the east.

All motorized roads and trails will be considered unless specifically excluded.

*Excludes:*

The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST, NFST 813), NFSR 391, NFST 842.

## **Upper Rio Grande**

*Includes:*

A portion of NFSR 520 to the top of Stony Pass, the actual headwaters of the Rio Grande River, and NFSR 506.

*Excludes:*

No roads or trails are excluded.

## **Bristol Head**

*Includes:*

NFSR 532 and accesses the top of Bristol Head Mountain providing a phenomenal panoramic view of much of the upper Rio Grande Basin.

*Excludes:*

No roads or trails are excluded.

## **Middle Creek**

*Includes:*

A general area that incorporates the Middle Creek drainage with primary access points roughly 7 – 15 miles above Creede; Fern Creek; North Lime Creek; and the Ivy Creek areas. This includes NFSRs 522, 522.1F, 523, 524, 525, 527, 527.1A, 528, and 530.

*Excludes:*

No roads or trails are excluded.

## **Creede**

*Includes:*

The Bachelor Loop, Rat Creek, Equity, and East Willow areas associated with NFSRs 502, 503, 504, and 505.

*Excludes:*

No roads or trails are excluded.

## **Shuttle pick-up/drop-off**

Specific locations outside of the areas described above have also been identified as pick-up and/or drop-off for shuttle services. These locations include:

- The northern-most end of the Wolf Creek Pass pull-out on east-bound Highway 160
- Lobo Overlook

- Wolf Creek Ski Area
- The upper and lower ends of:
  - Trout Creek Trail (NFST 831)
  - Deep Creek Trail (NFST 806)
  - Alder Bench (NFST 799).

## Over Snow Vehicles

### *Includes:*

Routes groomed by the local snowmobile clubs. There are two primary areas of groomed routes: one serviced by the town of South Fork, and one by Creede.

### *Excludes:*

No groomed roads or trails are excluded.

## Business opportunity

The last prospectus for outfitting and guiding was issued by the RGNF over a decade ago. Since then, the Divide RD has observed many changes in the public's recreation preferences. There are either no outfitter/guide services currently permitted to meet the need or, if there are permitted services, they are only authorized on a temporary basis.

The purpose of this solicitation is to issue long term (up to 10-year) authorizations for outfitting/guiding activities that are not currently provided commercially on the Divide RD. The goal is to address unmet public need, provide for a range of quality, safe recreation on NFS land, increase the tourism opportunities and economic base for local communities, and protect the Forest's natural resources.

Use is assigned by "service days;" a service day is one day or any part of one day on NFS lands for which an outfitter or guide provides services to one client. The total number of service days is calculated by multiplying each service day by the number of clients on the trip. Proposals should include realistic requests for the number of service days that the applicant has the capacity to provide or expect to use. Permit holders who fail to use all their authorized days will have the unused days removed from their permit. **The number of user days authorized may be different than that requested.**

Summer season is May 1 to November 14 and the winter season is November 15 to April 30. Weather and access conditions may affect actual start/end dates.

Potential service days and activities have been identified in Appendix B: Opportunities. As previously stated in the introduction those services include:

1. Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) guided day trips
2. OHV delivery to NFS lands, including pick up and/or retrieval
3. Scenic drives, including four wheel drive tours
4. Progressive mountain biking
5. Shuttle services
6. Over Snow Vehicle (OSV) guided day trips
7. Proponent-generated requests **excluding** fishing, hunting, river use, Wilderness, and horseback rides



No permanent developments will be authorized on the Forest. Any requests for temporary structures such as base camps or warming huts should be addressed through the operating plan.

Commercial filming and most commercial still photography require a separate special use permit. If companies wish to include filming or still photography or are considering contracting with a third party for filming/photography services, a separate commercial film permit is required. This is the case even if the outfitter/guide is providing the footage to clients as a service or using footage for advertising.

Successful applicants will be required to pay a fee for the use of National Forest System lands. The fee will be Option B (3% of gross revenues), as described in the FS-2700-4i, section IV. PERMIT FEES AND ACCOUNTING RECORDS. Additional fees may also be charged for assigned sites. In 2015 the minimum fee per assigned site was \$210.00. (See Appendix H. Sample Special Use Permit).

## **Permit and operations**

Authorized use resulting from this solicitation will be considered “probationary-priority use”. This means that the selected applicants will be issued a two-year probationary permit that may be converted to “full priority use” if the holder performs acceptably during that time. Priority permits are valid for a maximum of 10 years, including the probationary period. Performance rated as unacceptable or probationary may result in permit revocation or termination.

Only activities on NFS lands can be authorized through this prospectus. Use awarded through this solicitation may not be used as leverage to obtain permission for use on other jurisdictions, including private land. Any special use permits issued as a result of this offering will be administered by the Divide RD. Should a successful applicant also hold a permit on another RGNF district or forest, the Divide RD will consider adding use awarded through this prospectus that existing permit after the initial two year authorization.

Use is assigned by “service days;” a service day is one day or any part of one day on NFS lands for which an outfitter or guide provides services to one client. The total number of service days is calculated by multiplying each service day by the number of clients on the trip. Multiple activities, seasons, and combinations of service days may be listed on a single permit.

Priority use is assigned at the discretion of the authorized officer (Divide District Ranger) and shall be consistent with the RGNF Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan, 1996). Priority use can be authorized for a period up to but not to exceed ten years. The authorized use is based on the holder’s technical and financial capability, performance, LRMP, and Forest Service Manual and Handbook direction. When the permit expires, a new permit may be issued without competition if the holder has performed satisfactorily and at the sole discretion of the authorized officer.

## **Authorities**

Outfitter and guide activities are authorized by special use permits under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, 16 U.S.C. 6802(h), and implementing regulations at 36 CFR part 251, Subpart B; and 36 CFR 214.

Outfitter-guides should become familiar with the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and regional and forest orders. Closure orders may be implemented at any time, and permit holders must comply. A list

of current Supervisor's Orders may be found at the following website:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/riogrande/alerts-notice>

### Special Use Permit Requirements

A post-selection meeting will be held between the successful applicant(s) and the permit administrator to finalize the permitting process.

Unless specifically requested in the "How to submit a proposal" section of this prospectus, the documents listed below are not required at this time. The following is provided to assist in understanding the process after awarded use.

The final permit will include the following documents at a minimum:

- **Signed Permit.** Appendix H: FS 2700-4i. The permit provides the terms and conditions of the authorized use and addresses among other considerations the following:
  - Advertising
  - Record Keeping
  - Non Discrimination
  - Fees
  - Non-compliance
- **Final Operating Plan.** Appendix E: Operating plan. The selected applicant(s) will be required to develop an annual operating plan cooperatively with the Forest Service which will be made a part of the special use authorization. A sample operating plan can be found in Appendix E Sample Operating Plan
- **Insurance.** Appendix I: Insurance
- **Itineraries and Actual Use Reports.** Appendix K: Estimated and actual use reports
- **Performance Evaluation.** Appendix J: Performance evaluation
- **Copies of First Aid/CPR.** for all employees who will be on Forest with clients
- **Maps identifying routes.** for itineraries and camp locations
- **Other.** Copies of any/all required State, local, or other required Federal licenses, certificates, registrations or similar. An example of this might include PUC licensing requirements as stipulated in the Code of Colorado Regulations; 4 CCR 723-6.

### Special conditions and reservations

#### Special Conditions

1. All applicants have an equal opportunity to apply. Except for members of Congress, resident commissioners and current Forest Service employees, any individual or entity may apply.
2. The Forest Service cannot guarantee a profitable operation to the successful applicant(s). Applicants are responsible for reviewing the prospectus and making their own determination concerning business viability. Applicants are responsible to make their own estimates of costs on the basis of their proposals. The following is a partial list of expenses which applicants can anticipate. Additional expenses are likely.
  - a) Cost recovery fees
  - b) Insurance (liability, auto);
  - c) Vehicle identification, licensing and maintenance;
  - d) Fee to the Forest Service (Option B 3% of gross, assigned site fee);

- e) Applicable federal, state and local taxes, licenses, fees or charges;
- 3. The Divide RD will select the proposal(s) that offer the best service to the public, protection of the resources, and value to the government. The Divide RD is not obligated to accept the proposal(s) with the highest return to the government; the objective is to select those that will best serve the public need.
- 4. Companies or corporations submitting proposals must sign using the name of the appropriate executive officer and include proof of the officer's authority to sign and the entity's official address. Individuals submitting proposals must sign his/her name and furnish the address of his/her place of residence or business.
- 5. An annual performance evaluation will be prepared at the end of each operating season by the authorized officer's representative. This evaluation will be provided to the permittee for comments then provided to the authorized officer for the final rating. This evaluation will be based on inspections, public comments, and compliance with the terms and conditions of the special use permit and operating plan. An unacceptable performance rating may result in suspension or revocation of the special use permit. A sample performance evaluation form is included in Appendix J.
- 6. The selected applicant(s) will be required to mark vehicles, OHVs, OSVs, and bicycles with the company name or insignia. All employees must be easily identifiable as an employee of the company when working on NFS land. This may be through jackets, caps or other means of readily-visible identification.
- 7. Only activities on NFS lands can be authorized through this prospectus therefore no private land or other lands, including federal, state or county lands are included. Additionally, no use awarded through this offering may be used as leverage to obtain permission for use on land under other ownership.

### **Reservations**

- 1. The Forest Service reserves the right to select the successful applicant(s) based solely on the initial application, without oral or written discussions.
- 2. The Forest Service reserves the right to reject any or all applications and the right to not issue permits for any or all proposed uses.
- 3. The Forest Service reserves the right to rescind this prospectus at any time before a special use permit is issued.
- 4. No oral statements made representatives of the Forest Service modify the requirements of this prospectus. If it is determined that an error or omission has been made in the prospectus, or that additional information is required, every attempt will be made to provide a written amendment to all people/entities who have received a copy of this prospectus.
- 5. In the event that there is a contradiction between this prospectus and the special use permit, the special use permit terms will supersede the prospectus.
- 6. The information contained in submitted application packages may be kept confidential only to the extent permitted under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552) and Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a).

## **How to submit a proposal**

Applicants are strongly encouraged to research the area before submitting their proposals (reference Appendix A: Maps and Appendix B: Opportunities).

Mail or hand-deliver complete application packages to the Divide Ranger District:

Divide Ranger District  
ATTENTION: OUTFITTER/GUIDE PROSPECTUS  
c/o Martha A. Williamson  
13308 Highway 160  
Del Norte, CO 81132

### **Electronic application packages will NOT be accepted.**

Applications must be postmarked or received at the Divide District Office no later than 4:30 p.m., Mountain Time, on Friday July 1, 2016. Proposals submitted after this date will not be considered. Materials submitted with proposals may not be returned unless specifically requested.

This applicant warrants that no person or selling agency has been employed or retained to solicit or secure acceptance of his or her bid under this invitation upon an agreement or understanding for a commission, percentage, brokerage, or contingent fee, except a bona fide employee or bona fide established commercial selling agency maintained by this applicant for the purpose of doing business. For breach of this warranty, the Government shall have the right to annul any award under this invitation without liability, or at its option to recover from the applicant the amount of such commission, percentage, brokerage or contingent fee in addition to the consideration herein set forth.

Applicants must submit four (4) complete copies of their application package and supporting documents. Four (4) copies of the business plan must be submitted as a separate package.

Applications must be in sealed envelopes and must be signed by an authorized officer of the organization or individual submitting the application. The information is subject to verification by the Forest Service, and additional supporting data may be requested.

Applicants must include information about their organizational structure, the entity's legal name as recorded with the Secretary of State, mailing address with zip code, telephone number, FAX number, and e-mail address, designated agent, evidence of incorporation and good standing, if applicable, and name and address of each affiliate of the applicant. The person signing for an entity must have authority to sign.

Partnerships, limited liability companies (LLC), associations, or other unincorporated entities must:

- Provide the names and interests of the company's principals
- Submit a certified copy of the partnership agreement or other documentation establishing the entity or a certificate of good standing under the laws of the state where the entity is located.

## Information required in the proposal

To be considered, the application package must be typed and provide the following:

1. **Completed SF-299 Special Use Permit Application.** Use the forms enclosed as Appendix C.

Applications should include a minimum number of service days you would be willing to accept. The Forest Service will evaluate the number of days proposed by each applicant and may authorize fewer than those requested to allow for additional outfitters who provide different services and some level of business competition.

2. **Proposed Operating Plan.** Use the required Operating Plan template (reference Appendix E: Sample Operating Plan) to fully describe how you will operate your outfitting and guiding service. Your Operating Plan should address the following at a minimum:

- ✓ *Types and kinds of services proposed and proposed rates for a minimum of two years.* Fully describe your proposed trips and how you propose to operate them, including:
  - Your maximum and minimum client : guide ratios
  - A description of the daily schedule of trip windows proposed
  - Periods of use (midweek vs. weekends)
  - Types of trips for varying levels of skills and abilities
  - Explain any variable pricing, discounts, and/or passes
- ✓ *Customer service/guest relations.* Describe:
  - Your customer service philosophy and services to be provided to your customers.
  - Your proposal for providing customer services to diverse individuals, groups, families, organizations, and institutions. This includes advertising, outreach, reservations, meeting special needs, handling complaints, and trip evaluations.
  - How you will ensure nondiscrimination.
  - Your methods for resolving conflicts with the general public.
  - Your general knowledge of the area, nearby attractions, Forest Service regulations and other information you will provide and how you will use that information to enhance client experience or to improve your overall operations.
  - How and what educational information about public lands in general will be shared as well as that specific to the Divide RD,
- ✓ *Rental equipment, delivery, retrieval.* Describe:
  - Your proposal for the types and kinds of equipment and accessories you would be using.
  - Your procedures and schedule for inspections and repair of all equipment proposed for use in your operation.
  - What equipment and/or accessories you would purchase and how in order to operate at full capacity.
- ✓ *Personnel.* Describe:
  - Your proposal for hiring, including outreach, recruitment, and providing local employment opportunities.
  - The standards and qualifications for your guides and any other employees involved in the operations.

- How employee training will be accomplished for actual trip guiding (if applicable), safety and emergency procedures, working with diverse clientele, public relations, and general communications.
- How your employees will be identified as your employees when working on NFS land.
- ✓ *Health, safety, and etiquette.* Describe:
  - Your accident prevention program and the information that would be given to all clients, including safety talks, safety tips and techniques and proper trail etiquette.
  - Your procedures for handling emergencies including medical, breakdowns,
  - Safety gear and repair equipment that you will provide to clients
  - The steps you will take to assist the Forest Service in maintaining the outstanding qualities of the natural environment
  - The methods for minimizing impacts during lunch stops, photo stops, overnight sites, etc. including garbage removal and sanitation
  - How these methods would be shared with clients.
- ✓ *Base of operations.* Describe:
  - Your proposal for the facilities you will use to meet your clients' needs during the trips and how they will enhance the customer experience
  - Your method of taking reservations, accommodating walk-in clients, accommodating diverse user groups or groups of varying ages and abilities, and whether you will provide service for groups who may have their own equipment.
- ✓ *Ground transportation.* Describe:
  - How ground transportation will be used to accomplish the trips, including:
    - The kinds, types and numbers of vehicles (cars, bus, vans, etc.)
    - Trailer and vehicle capacities (people, bicycles, OHVs, OSVs)
    - Driver licensing and operating skills
    - Emergency communications.
  - Your schedule and procedures for regular vehicle inspections
  - How vehicles will be identified.
- ✓ *Optional services.* Describe your proposal for any optional services you intend to provide,

### 3. Experience and references

**Applicable business experience.** Describe in detail any experience related to operating an outfitting and guiding business and, more specifically, to services requested through this offering. This information may be included as part of the business plan. Information should address the following items:

- ✓ Dates, description, services provided, public served, location, and volume of business.
- ✓ Previously operated outfitting and guiding operations.
- ✓ Experience including time, location, and level directly related to requested use(s).
- ✓ Information regarding past performance, either through performance evaluations from agency representatives, customer survey reports, and/or letters of recommendation.
- ✓ Information demonstrating knowledge of the area, as well as educational and interpretive capacity.

**Business References.** Furnish at least **three business references** in support of your business experience with names, addresses, phone numbers and email address (or notation no email exists). Letters of reference are acceptable.

4. **Business Plan.** Submit a business plan (reference Appendix F for a Sample Business Plan). Your business plan will be reviewed to assess your financial and business capability to successfully operate and manage the proposed services. As part of your business plan, you must include:
  - a. Estimates for numbers of users and expected sales for at least the first 5 years of operation.
  - b. Proposed fees to the public
  - c. Costs of equipment replacement and repair, advertising, all anticipated operational expenses, employee expenses, taxes, fees to the government, etc.

Failure to submit a complete business plan will not allow us to make an equal evaluation among all proposals. Applicants can contact the Small Business Development Council (SBDC) for assistance in putting together a business plan. Local SBDC contacts are provided in Appendix F. *Financial information is confidential and will not be released without the permission of the applicant.*

5. **Financial Information.** Applicants must provide sufficient information to reasonably assure the Forest Service that they have the financial capability to successfully operate the proposed business. This may be done in one of three ways:
  - I. **You have financial statements for the past three fiscal years that have been audited, reviewed, or compiled by a CPA:** Provide a complete set of all financial statements for the last three fiscal years that have been audited, reviewed, or compiled by a certified public accountant (CPA). Complete Form FS-6500-24, "Financial Statement," (reference Appendix G: "Financial Statement," FS-6500-24) to certify the accuracy of the financial statements if they were only compiled by a CPA but not audited or reviewed.
  - II. **You DO NOT have financial statements for the past three fiscal years that have been audited, reviewed, or compiled by a CPA:** Submit a completed Forest Service Form FS-6500-24, "Financial Statement," for any fiscal year you were in business during the last three for which an audited, reviewed, or compiled financial statement has not been prepared. Limited liability companies should list the name of the company in block 1, list the names and interests of the principals in block 5, list their members in block 6, and complete the certification in Part (D)(1) of FS-6500-24. Corporations or partnerships should also complete Part (D)(1) of FS-6500-24. Individuals should complete part (D)(2) of FS-6500-24. A sample "Financial Statement," FS-6500-24, is included in Appendix G.
  - III. **You have not been in business for the last three fiscal years:** If you have not been in business for the last three fiscal years and cannot submit audited financial statements and/or an FS-6500-24 for that period, submit three fiscal years of projected financial statements that are compiled by a certified public accountant using the forecast method.

Any financial information submitted by applicants shall conform to generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) or other comprehensive bases of accounting. Any previously prepared financial documents that are submitted must be un-redacted and in their original form, including footnotes.

Applicants must show at least 25% of the first year's operating costs in liquid assets. Liquid assets are those assets which are readily converted to cash.

Financial statements are secured in confidence and are not public information. Applicants must state if they want their financial information returned to them.

**6. Additional Information.**

To avoid unnecessary expense for the applicant, insurance policies, brochures, etc. should not be obtained until after an award is made.

**Fees to the Forest Service.**

This offering only provides Option B (based on 3% of annual adjusted gross revenue) as the method of calculating the fee for commercial use.

**Cost Recovery Fee**

The Forest Service is required to assess cost recovery fees to recover the agency's processing costs for special use applications, subject to requirements and limitations described in 36 CFR 251.58(c)(1)(ii) and (c)(3)(iii). Payment of a processing fee does not obligate the Forest Service to authorize the applicant's proposed use and occupancy.

Processing fees for the application are based upon the direct and indirect costs that the Forest Service incurs in reviewing the application, evaluating the applicant's technical and financial qualifications and selecting qualified applicants. All entities or individuals who submit a proposal during the solicitation process agree to participate in a Cost Recovery Agreement.

Additional cost recovery fees may also apply for all proposals that require 50 or more hours of environmental analysis prior to issuing authorization. The outfitting and guiding services specifically solicited in Items 1-6 on Page 1 are not anticipated to require more than 50 hours of analysis. Activities proposed under Item 7, Proponent-generated requests, may require additional analysis. Proponents of activities that will require over 50 hours of analysis will be responsible for additional cost recovery costs.

**Award**

The Divide RD will base its selections solely on the applicant's written application package and any past performance information obtained through reference checks. A Forest Service panel made up of two Divide RD employees and one from an adjacent Forest will evaluate each application. The panel will review, evaluate, and compare proposals using the criteria described below.

During the evaluation process, the panel may contact any references, including any federal, state, and local entities that have had a business relationship with the applicant. The evaluation panel may also consider past performance information from other sources. Applicants without prior infractions of local, state or federal regulations may be judged more favorably in rating the proposals.

After it has evaluated all the proposals, the panel will make a recommendation to the authorized officer (Divide District Ranger), who has final selection authority to accept or deny the recommendations of the panel. Selection(s) will be made by September 1, 2016.



The selection of the successful applicant(s) is subject to administrative appeal pursuant to 36 CFR Part 214. All applicants will be notified of the selected proposals, their appeal rights, and the appeal process.

### **Evaluation criteria**

The panel will evaluate each application package based on whether the proposal meets, exceeds or does not meet the evaluation criteria and professional judgment. The panel members will review proposals both independently and collectively. The panel's recommendation(s) will be based on the following evaluation criteria in descending order of importance, but not be limited to the following:

1. **Quality of services.** This includes the ability of the kind and quality of services described in the proposed operating plan to meet public need. The operating plan should be thorough and provide specifics about the services provided. Describe how the proposed operation will provide quality experiences for customers. Please add any information that you feel is pertinent to the evaluation criteria.
2. **Experience and references.** This includes prior experience and qualifications to operate delivery services, outfitting and guiding services, and/or other related fields. Describe the applicant and staff's experience and qualifications that show they will meet the requirements of the activity. Describe the applicant and staff's knowledge of the area and its attractions. This will include work history, references, past permits issued by land management agencies and an evaluation of past performance information.
3. **Business plan and financial information.** This includes the applicant's demonstrated ability for the business to be successful and their financial capability and/or backing to perform the required services.

The Forest Service reserves the right to rescind the prospectus at any time before a special use permit is issued. If the Forest Service rescinds the prospectus, application fees will be returned.

### **Post-selection requirements**

Once an applicant has been selected, they will be required to schedule a meeting with the Divide RD permit administrator. The permit administrator will explain the requirements for the probationary permit. Selected applicant(s) should anticipate submitting the following prior to issuance of a special use permit:

1. A final annual operating plan which must be submitted electronically in a WORD (.doc) format for efficient review and editing if necessary.
2. Documentation of required liability insurance, including copy of the entire insurance policy and certificate of insurance.
3. List of employees and their current 1<sup>st</sup> aid /CPR certifications
4. A state business license and any other federal, state, or local certifications or licenses that are required for the operation.
5. Required deposits and advanced payments (typically the minimum user fee and assigned site fees, if applicable)

The successful applicant(s) will be required to submit all of these items within 60 days of their first full season of proposed use. If the above requirements are not met, a special use permit will not be issued. The applicant who provides the next best value to the government may then be selected for the special

use permit, subject to the same requirements; or the assigned service days may be retained as part of a use pool at the discretion of the authorized officer.

## **Appendix A: Maps**

**Appendix B: Opportunities**

**Appendix C: Application (SF 299)**

**Appendix D: Requested use summary**

**Appendix E: Sample operating plan**

**Appendix F: Business plan**

**Appendix G: Financial statement (FS 6500-24)**

**Appendix H: Sample permit (FS 2700-4i)**

**Appendix I: Insurance**

**Appendix J: Sample performance evaluation**

**Appendix K: Estimated and actual use reports**